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Montgomery Ranks Third Highest in State in Number of SWAT Deployments over Past Year

The county reduced deployments by 21 percent compared to 2013

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VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Montgomery County police deployed its SWAT team 163 times in 2014, ranking third in the state in the number of deployments, behind the Baltimore City and Prince George's County police departments, according to statistics released by the state earlier this month.

The 163 deployments marks a 21 percent decrease from 2013, when the county deployed its SWAT team 205 times.

Only Baltimore City, with 230 deployments, and Prince George's County, with 418 deployments, had more SWAT team activity than Montgomery County, according to the fiscal year 2014 statistics, which included deployments from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014.

The data has been released annually since the General Assembly passed a law in 2009 intended to create transparency around SWAT activity. Berwyn Heights Mayor Chye Calvo had lobbied for the release of data after a Prince George's County SWAT team raided his home in July 2008 and shot and killed his two dogs. The raid occurred after a package of marijuana was delivered to Calvo's doorstep. Calvo told police he did not know where the marijuana came from. He was not charged in the incident.

The law requires jurisdictions to submit SWAT statistics that detail the location, legal authority, reason for and outcome of each deployment; but the state website only publishes a summary of deployments statewide and not the details for each jurisdiction.

The Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention has not responded to *Bethesda Beat's* Aug. 18 request that it release the data pertaining to jurisdictions.

Of the 1,689 statewide deployments in fiscal year 2014, 93 percent were undertaken as part of a search warrant, 3.6 percent were for barricade situations and 2.2 percent were "other." Sixty-eight percent of the deployments statewide involved forcible entry, while about 30 percent did not, according to the released statistics.

About 60 percent of the deployments statewide resulted in an arrest. Five deployments resulted in someone being killed; 23 people were injured statewide during deployments and five animals were killed by SWAT teams. A SWAT officer was injured during 11 deployments during fiscal year 2014, according to the statistics.

Table 1. Number of SWAT Deployments and the Percent of Total Deployments by Police Agency

	Frequency	Percent		Frequency	Percent
Aberdeen Police Department	40	2.4%	Harford County Sheriff's Office	32	1.9%
Annapolis City Police Department	27	1.6%	Howard County Police Department	69	4.1%
Anne Arundel County Police Department	97	5.7%	Kent County Sheriff's Office	3	0.2%
Baltimore City Police Department	230	13.6%	Laurel Police Department	18	1.1%
Baltimore County Police Department	127	7.5%	Maryland State Police	64	3.8%
Berlin Police Department	4	0.2%	Montgomery County Police Department	163	9.7%
Calvert County Sheriff's Office	84	5.0%	Ocean City Police Department	4	0.2%
Cambridge Police Department	13	0.8%	Prince George's County Police Department	418	24.7%
Charles County Sheriff's Office	83	4.9%	Prince George's County Sheriff's Office	6	0.4%
Cumberland Police Department	17	1.0%	Queen Anne's County Sheriff's Office	13	0.8%
Department of Natural Resources	4	0.2%	Salisbury Police Department	9	0.5%
Dorchester County Sheriff's Office	15	0.9%	St. Mary's County Sheriff's Office	57	3.4%
Easton Police Department	1	0.1%	Takoma Park Police Department	2	0.1%
Frederick County Sheriff's Office	11	0.7%	Washington County Sheriff's Office	2	0.1%
Frederick Police Department	4	0.2%	Westminster Police Department	36	2.1%
Garrett County Sheriff's Office	2	0.1%	Wicomico County Sheriff's Office	14	0.8%
Greenbelt Police Department	1	0.1%	Worcester County Sheriff's Office	11	0.7%
Hagerstown Police Department	8	0.5%			

Table 2. Legal Authority by Underlying Reason for the SWAT Deployment

Authority		Part I Crime	Part II Crime	Emergency Petition	Suicidal	Other	Total
Arrest Warrant	Count	8	3	0	0	0	11
	Pct	1.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%
Barricade	Count	36	3	9	12	0	60
	Pct	5.5%	0.3%	81.8%	75%	0.0%	3.6%
Exigent Circumstances	Count	4	1	2	2	0	9
	Pct	0.6%	0.1%	18.2%	12.5%	0.0%	0.5%
Other	Count	22	11	0	2	2	37
	Pct	3.4%	1.1%	0.0%	12.5%	100%	2.2%
Search Warrant	Count	581	991	0	0	0	1,572
	Pct	89.2%	98.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	93.1%
Total Deployments	Count	651	1,009	11	16	2	1,689
	Pct	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 3. Forcible Entry by Underlying Reason for the SWAT Deployment

Forcible Entry		Part I Crime	Part II Crime	Emergency Petition	Suicidal	Other	Total
No	Count	201	280	5	10	1	497
	Pct	30.9%	27.8%	45.5%	62.5%	50%	29.4%
Yes	Count	450	729	6	6	1	1,192
	Pct	69.1%	72.2%	54.5%	37.5%	50%	68.2%
Total Deployments	Count	651	1009	11	16	2	1,689
	Pct	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%



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The Watch

Shedding light on the use of SWAT teams



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By Radley Balko

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A new bill in Utah that would require the state's police agencies to report statistics about how and how often they use their SWAT and tactical teams has just unanimously passed a committee in the state's senate. The bill is part of a larger, fascinating police reform movement currently under way in Utah.



If it passes,
Utah would
become the
second state

A San Bernardino County Sheriff's SWAT team
requests a report on the use of the team by
the state. The report is part of a larger effort
to reform the use of SWAT teams in the state.

in the country—[after Maryland](#)—to require police agencies to track that information. Collecting data about how SWAT teams are used, how often they're

used, and what results from their deployment is a critical step toward determining whether or not they're being used properly. The biggest barrier to performing that sort of analysis has always been that the data just don't exist.

But in the one state where we do have the data, here's what we know:

- Since the law passed in 2009, the data have consistently shown that on average there are about 4.5 SWAT raids each day in Maryland.
- Prince George's County alone averaged well over one SWAT raid each day in 2012 (510 in total).
- In 2012, nearly 90 percent of the SWAT raids in Maryland were to serve search warrants.
- About two of every three SWAT raids used forced entry.
- Half the SWAT deployments in 2012 were for "Part II" crimes, the nonviolent class of crimes. The vast majority of those raids were to serve search warrants on people suspected of drug offenses.
- In 22 raids in 2012, or a little over one percent of the total, a law enforcement officer fired his gun.
- About 15 percent of the raids in 2012 resulted in no seized contraband of any kind. About a third of the raids resulted in no arrests. The Maryland law



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doesn't track what charges resulted in the raids that did produce arrests, but past reviews of SWAT raids by local newspapers suggest that only a small percentage of raids result in felony charges.

Here's hoping Utah and other states follow Maryland's lead. The criminologist Peter Kraska has estimated that there are somewhere between 50,000 and 80,000 SWAT raids per year now in America, and that number is likely growing. It's past time for a public discussion about whether that sort of figure is appropriate and consistent with the values of a free society. But we can't have that discussion until we have a better grasp of why they're conducting all of these raids, and what they're finding when they do.

Radley Balko blogs about criminal justice, the drug war and civil liberties for The Washington Post. He is the author of the book "Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Forces."